



Partnering on training programs for high-demand jobs

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Collaboration between Los Alamos National Laboratory, Northern New Mexico College (NNMC), the University of New Mexico-Los Alamos (UNM-LA), Newport News Nuclear BWXT – Los Alamos (N3B), and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) is helping prepare the workforce of the future for well-paid careers at the Lab and N3B.

The partnership is launching programs that train more than 50 area students for high-demand jobs as radiological control technicians (RCTs) and nuclear-trained operators, with funding support from NMDWS.

The news was announced at NNMC in Española at a July 30 event attended by Workforce Solutions Department Secretary Bill McCamley and State Higher Education Department (HED) Secretary Kate O’Neill, together with students, and leaders from the organizations involved. Financial support from NMDWS comes through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and through apprenticeship funding, and will assist students with tuition and salary dollars.

“These programs serve as gateways to good jobs in key areas with both employers,” said McCamley. “This sort of collaboration between the State, higher education institutions and employers provides students with a clear path to a profession and stops them worrying about debt as they gear up for new opportunities.”

“We applaud Governor Lujan Grisham’s strong support of these workforce development initiatives that are aimed at impacting people’s lives and our state’s economy,” said Thom Mason, director of Los Alamos National Laboratory. “Programs such as these are win-win because they prepare local students for good paying jobs and provide the Laboratory with the skilled workforce it needs.”

RCTs and nuclear-trained operators play a vital role at both the Laboratory and N3B by monitoring activities and ensuring that operations are safe and comply with policies and procedures. Employees in these fields have a \$42,000 starting salary and can advance to a salary of more than \$100,000.

Associate degree program

In partnership with the Laboratory, NNMC is offering a [two-year associate degree in Radiation Protection](#) that provides career opportunities at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Radiological control technicians help the Laboratory safely conduct operations that are essential to its national security mission.

In addition to funding the salary of the NMMC faculty member teaching the program and donating equipment for the teaching laboratory, the Laboratory and the National Nuclear Security Administration will support tuition and salaries for 10 of the initial cohort of 40 students. The NMDWS funding will support tuition for the other 30.

“Northern New Mexico College is honored to be a part of this wonderful collaboration,” said Rick Bailey, president of NNMC. “We are grateful to Secretaries McCamley and O’Neill for their leadership, and to Laboratory operator Triad and N3B for their partnership. Along with our friends at UNM-Los Alamos, we look forward to providing exciting career pathways for our students and economic development momentum for our community.”

Programs with N3B

NNMC and UNM-LA are also partnering with environmental remediation company N3B to offer a 22-month state-registered apprenticeship program to train nuclear operators, with an initial cohort of five students, and a 12-week intensive academic program for ten students leading to a certificate in Radiation Control.

“We congratulate UNM-LA, Northern New Mexico College, LANL, N3B and Triad for their leadership and collaboration. NMDWS and HED are partnering to become known as departments that work for students who become skilled workers and for employers who find the talent they need,” said Kate O’Neill, HED Secretary.

Scott Braley, faculty member at Northern New Mexico College, giving a tour of the college’s new radiation protection laboratory.

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